

# If You Remember

Daniel V. McNamee Jr.

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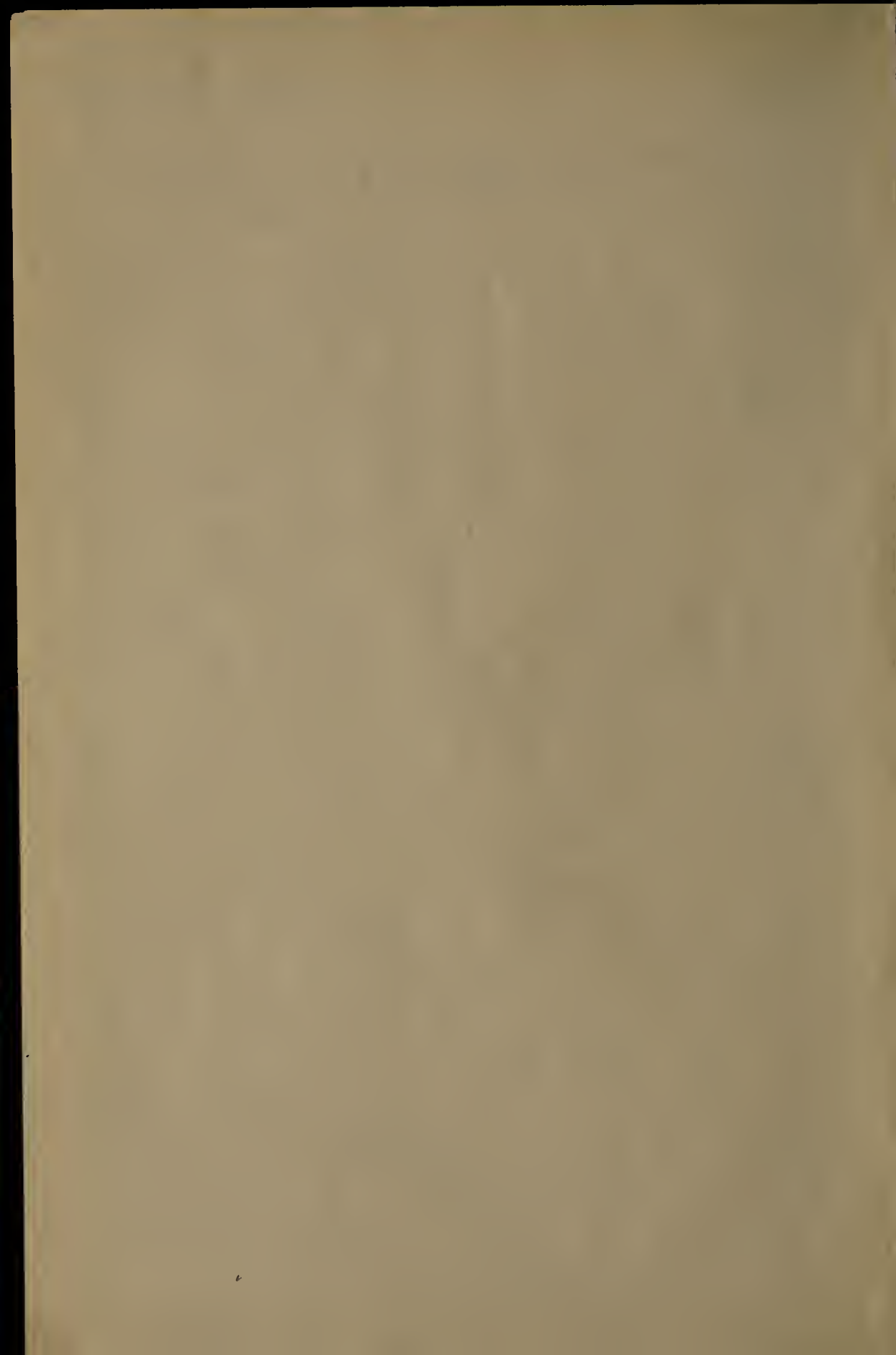
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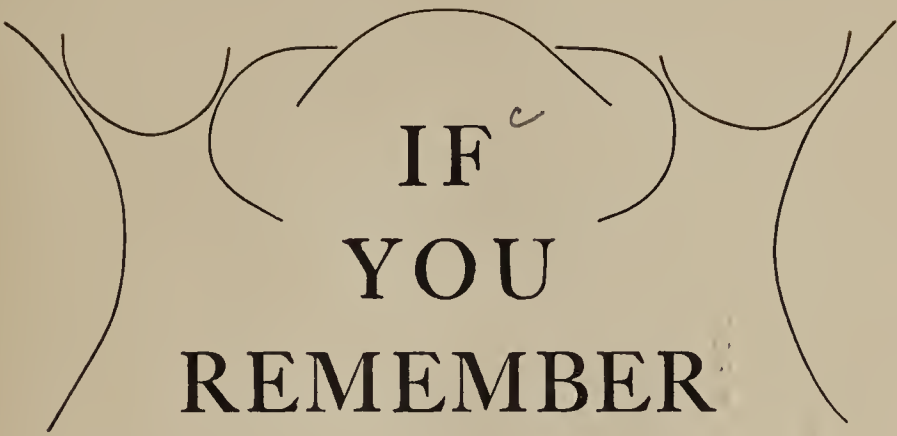
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First Printing, 1936.

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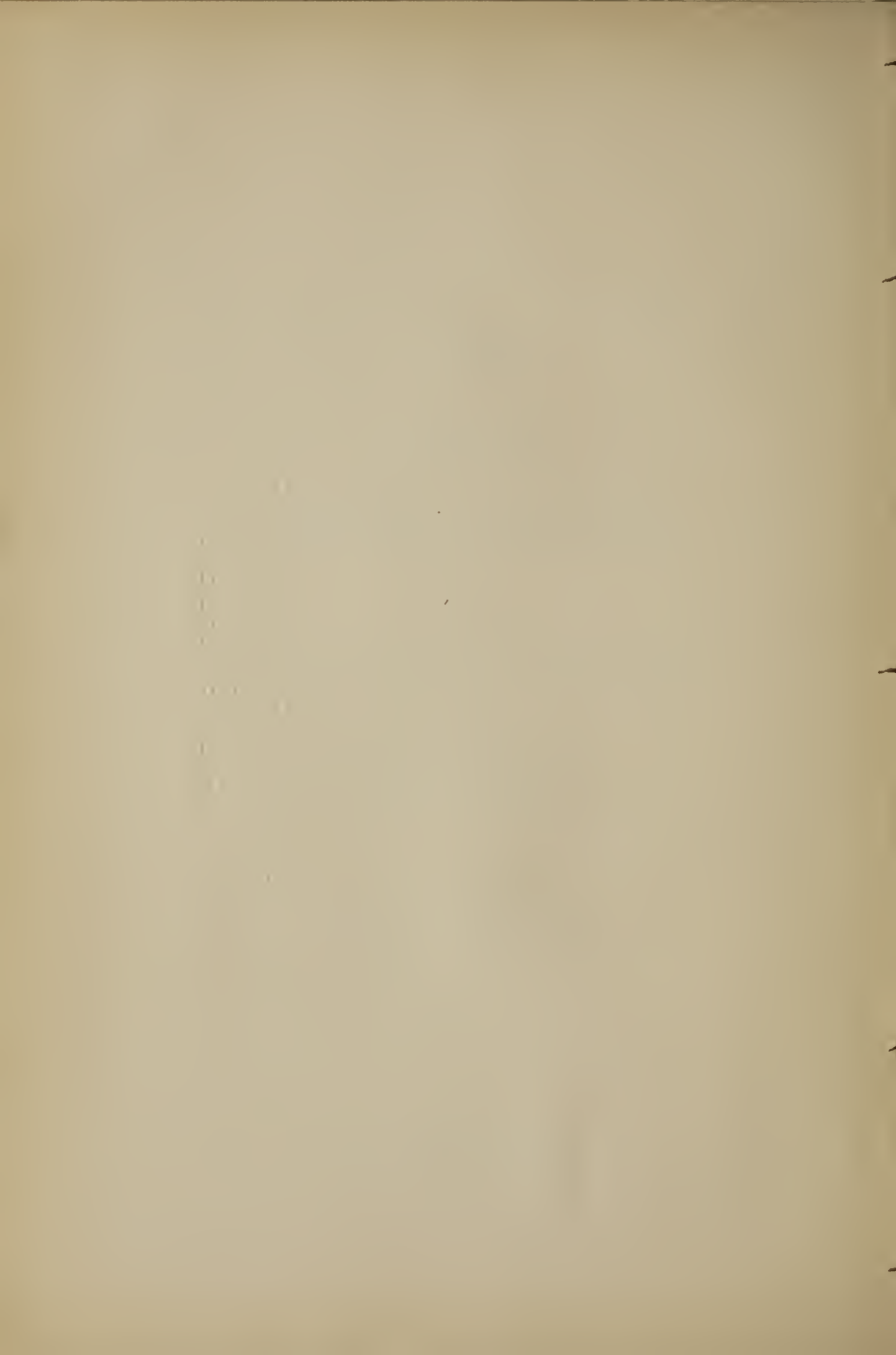
by

DANIEL V. McNAMEE JR.

*(Monographs on Columbia  
County, New York)*

Illustrated by  
CHARLES E. CLARK

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For

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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## FOREWORD

Sometimes when a room is still and dark, when a lemon light from the fire-place flicks the walls in a furtive way, when from the hearth comes a soothing sound in the quiet, the senses are lulled—all but the eyes. Fixed on livid movements that dart among the embers, they watch. Figures play about. And for them, scenes, finely drawn, stand forth from against the redness, of ships, of great houses, the mountains, or of a well-traveled road teeming with honest horse-wagons, and journeymen of every size and sort.

Clocks tick the moments away. And the spell of the hearth keeps on. The fire may be the memory of our own county, Columbia, in which live the quick, eager people of her three centuries of tales. Perhaps her civilization comes before us—portraying a



wilderness, its cultivation, the growth and the change to new, things ever appearing for a vivid instant, and vanishing.

One chances upon that fire in the memories of older people. If you attend it, if you remember, it lights everything you meet. When one has encountered it so, to set a little part of it down, in so far as capacity and opportunity permit, seems natural. The pity is that so much escapes, like thrilling music lost in the air.

Such an attempt has its own reward. And because there may be some living in the same tradition, who feel a kindred pride or pleasure in harking back over the times that have gone, this little book is presented.

## POST-SCRIPT FOREWORD

To preface a second edition is an exciting, and such an altogether unfamiliar pleasure. Yet even now it is plainly the county which is recommended to you. Lovely scenes on the Hudson never grow dull. Follow our creeks. Down them, floating on leaf-clusters in the Fall, swishing along with the secret January streams under ice, tumbling and rumbling with the broken flows of an icy new Spring, and with all the swimming, brimming water of quieter months, come cargoes of story-telling. Of all this wealth a small book can only be a suggestion.

Noisy, busy mill-towns line the streams. Farmers till the valleys. Or, think of the occasional house far upon a hill whose man comes down in a whisper of strangeness for a day with the village. Railways and roads

are busy and real by day, busy in a nightmarish night, they and their men.

Consider the people; and their experience. Consider the beauty. And I repeat: The County's the thing.

Balliol College

Oxford

November 15, 1937.



Widow Mary Place

# I

## AN APOLOGY; AND A WIDOW

**I**F there's an old house, a beaten road, or the ruin of a mill once humming with profit and busy hands, there must be threads to a romantic fabric lying everywhere, needing only a sympathetic eye to recognize them, and an understanding hand to reweave the pattern. Of such remnants, ripe for rebirth, our neighborhood has a full share. Mayhap, other persons enjoy that prospect; and it may well be that they will read with sympathy my fond attempt to vivify the aura which clings to everything old—the breath of yesteryear.

Perhaps the first time I felt keenly something more than I could see, was during a visit to the Widow Mary Place, down along the Bell's Pond Road. And



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simple things suggested my mystery. You know, the imposing mansion looks austere down on the meek pond, the latter seeming so thankful to be removed from the threatening shadow of powerful columns. And there in the trees at the water's edge stood a stag, graceful and dark. He would have scampered to the hills, of course, as we walked up, except that he was iron. I thought: that great house knows one soul at least who regrets the flight of the deer, and holds this one fast for company, and perhaps to invite the rest. And then came speculation about who had lived in that shut place, interested in flying hooves and soft fauns. The answer to my inquiry was itself intriguing. The Widow Mary! For whoever in the world might that lady be?

Now bachelors are dull folk. And

*AN APOLOGY; AND A WIDOW*

perhaps mothers-in-law remain something more. But widows! They are fascinating persons, whose glamour (as glamour will) exists quite apart from the question why. And think of the merry lady who left her name with an estate for a century after her court there had broken up! Who her husband was is quite beside the point. Suffice it to say that his name was Henry Livingston. His memory proved to be a liquid evaporated before the rich sun of his lady's personality; while of her rare beauty and splendid hospitality has sprung a legend which warms that white mansion as no modern dweller could. Her charm cloaks its rooms with the romance of an ancient Ball, and thrills a visitor (in a more tenuous sense, even a resident who is visiting the Widow Mary) with the reflected grandeur of that radiant hostess who was

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known to a deferential society, not as Mrs. Livingston, indeed, but as Lady Mary.

To speed up the long drive to her wide portico, the choicest titles of the world felt it a rare privilege. Louis Phillipe, later King of France, was a delighted guest. So too, was the gallant Lafayette! And Joseph Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, who had been King of Spain, came to Lady Mary's Court with his entire entourage. Indeed this latter King was so charmed that his visit was a vivid memory all his days. When near death he made it the theme of matchless tribute. And to the Widow Mary's daughter, as she chanced to Florence in her travels, he breathed the words: "Your mother should have been a queen." Should have been, did the Royal gentleman say? She was.



## II

### CURIOUS PEOPLE

**T**HAT'S what Eldress Sarah Collins called them—"very curious people!" But her words were pronounced slowly and reverently, and seemed to indicate that she considered them curious in the sense of wonderful. She felt that by some force inexplicable to her they were able to achieve results she would never see again anywhere. Women grey caped and bonneted! And the men in quaker-hats! These are symbols of the strangeness which environs the New Lebanon Shakers.

The Shaker Village is still snuggled against the side of Lebanon Mountain. For about a century and a half it has remained in one end of that beautiful

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and fertile valley, quite sheltered against bitter Berkshire winters by its friendly hills. Once it knew the bustle of the hundreds who lived a communal life there. But today it looms empty as an unmanned ship peopled only by a few ancient persons who have outlived their day. The Village, no longer vibrant, is already subject to inroads from the outside world; and Shakerism is dead. But there, among those uniquely styled buildings, of Shaker construction, one reads readily a legend of greatness now gone, of high material success, whose monuments must ever crumble.

In that New Lebanon area, to farm was the natural course. But when the Shakers turned to that industry their large numbers of willing workers, tilled thousands of acres, so that their gran-

### *CURIOUS PEOPLE*

naries held the greatest and finest produce in this part of the country. Everyone worked. And think what a hive of activity Shaker farms must have been! No slack! No sloth! For theirs was the labor of owners; each spurred on by the knowledge that he worked for himself and his friends.

And as Shaker energy was expended along other lines, the same intelligent industry ruled. They prepared tools in their own foundry, where it was practical. They built their own buildings, some of great size, of stone, and brick, as well as wood. And to see the number of appliances to which they adapted water power is amazing! Grain mills have long been so run. But what of washing machines? Saw mills? And churns? Their village had numerous arti-

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ficial ponds ready for use; and their eager ingenuity found water power a utility having no end of applications. Moreover, they made chairs and rugs, in which arts there is still one craftswoman at work. They wove and tailored their own clothing, and it was their boast that an unpracticed eye could not discover the stitching—a degree of excellence which was their aim in whatever pursuits they undertook. Shaker herbs and medicines were famous the nation wide. And their harvest seeds went beyond our shores to be sown in the fields of Europe. When one considers the extent of such industries, as well as the Shakers' remarkable proficiency and enthusiasm, it is easy to believe that their independent existence was not only wholesome but abundant.

### *CURIOUS PEOPLE*

But the material aspect of Shaker life is only a part of it. It doesn't even offer sufficient reason for their existence. And such a communistic organization, however successful, was an unnatural growth for late 18th and 19th Century America, without some further motive. And naturally enough, about the Shaker society lay the enveloping cloak of religion. They were a sect born of Quakerism. And in their code were embodied some of the finest elements of 17th Century religious Dissent in England, whose direct descendant Shakerism was. Perhaps they were anachronistic — and old fashioned as well as odd they were, during the whole course of their history. They displayed the same tumultuous fervor as Puritanism, in an age given over to Science and Reason. And they practiced, in their daily lives: temperance,



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charity, industry, and unmitigated celibacy. Actually their conduct reflects the fact that they were keenly sensible of the overpowering presence of the Almighty (their God was dual, i.e., a Father and a Mother), to whom their lives were directed. And perhaps the best summary of the Shaker motif is their own simple motto: "Hands to work and Hearts to God."

The Shaker Village represents a great deal—in fact a way of thought, as well as way of conduct. About these once fine buildings, myriads of men and women lived, and thought that way, a busy, contented people. Picture a Shaker street when work was done! It would be grey with the subdued facing of their simple garments, but simply teeming with life. Eager, interested, efficient life, too! Every

### *CURIOUS PEOPLE*

lawn would be richly green, the drives planed, and each building ship-shape. For an observer, the Shakers clarify sharply the time-honored philosophy: "Simplicity is strength."

But what was it Sarah Collins called them? Very curious people! And weren't they? That statement of a woman 73 years a Shaker, carries untold significance. What a curious religion! And certainly theirs was a curious societal arrangement, eliminating what is for most of us the core of life, marriage. But during their halcyon days they cared not a whit about the rest of us. They sang, yes, and they danced, as part of their ritual. And if the elegance of their annual festival day ("Social Gathering," they called it) is an indication of their familiarity with such matters, they knew

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sometimes a lighter moment during the year.

Their days, it is true, were unadorned; only needs were well supplied, and perhaps something more. But after reflection, one asks if adornment is not often tinsel, as they felt it to be. The Shakers' round knew none of it. Rather, their days were accompanied by the quiet, yet satisfying rhythm of a simple life.



**Shakers Keep Their Distance**



### III

#### FATHER ABRAHAM

**T**HERE are all sorts of fathers, good, bad, and the myriad varieties which merit something from each of these descriptive epithets. Historians glory in the Founding Fathers, and the Fathers of the Constitution. Sometimes, too, it so happens that a person is highly touted as father to a thought. But, do you know, one never hears of the Father of Columbia County. We have one. What is more, he was rather a remarkable man; one who knew completely the full rule for dealing with the forest and war-whoop environment of a 17th Century Hudson Valley. He was Major Abraham Staats, soldier, trader, and pioneer—and first man to settle in the geographical limits of Columbia County.

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Presumably placid Holland failed to satisfy his adventurous spirit. Certainly that complaint was answered by untamed and unexplored America, for he led here a most colorful life. At Fort Orange his post was that of surgeon. But in those unmannerly days, such a division of labor was not fixed; and a medical man, too, had a hole in the barricade for his musket, when "the varmint" let loose.

The Major, to be sure, was no common soldier. His profession of medicine he practiced well, and beyond that he was such a successful large-scale fur trader, that as early as 1657 he sent 4,200 beaver skins to Amsterdam. And think what fur trading meant in those years! Common philosophy is agreed that to "pick" a fight is elementary.

### *FATHER ABRAHAM*

Now to pick a fight with a painted Red man was just too easy. But to be a friend, to understand a savage enemy's background and wants, so that trade was possible in harmony—that required keen and sympathetic observation, as well as a quick mind. Such, we may believe, were qualities added to the soldierly character of our "Father Abraham."

Those were crude and painful days for men in America. And perhaps our own Major was the first man in this part of the country who achieved a satisfactory dissipation of the natural barbarity. The record of his success was written of in 1679 by voyagers from Holland, who sailed by his settlement in their journey. They marveled at the house he had built, there where the Kinderhook Creek flows into the Hudson.

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Their own keen ambitions were inflated by the equipped establishment they saw—the farm and home topped by his sloop “Claverack,” floating at anchor in the River. And the term which they chose to describe the master of such elegance was “The Child of Luxury.”

But our ancient ancestor stepped many a rod more thorny and beset with pitfalls. His exertions to attain the domestic comfort which astonished that wild land, must have been colossal. For man-power, we remember, of any color, was the scarcest commodity in the New World. And every article of property meant long shipment from Europe, or independent creation out of the crude materials at hand. And the worst of blows came in 1664. Whatever the charm which won him Indian friends, in that

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year it was snuffed out before the on-rushing melee of the Mohican-Mohawk Wars. Broadhead's chronicle relates that his house was attacked and burned, and thus the "Child of Luxury" and his family were reduced to a forest home and an earthy couch.

Harsh fortune, indeed, to be turned into a friendless wild where existence itself was a sleepless problem! And certainly indomitable fortitude was put to the acid test to rebuild the family's refuge, in time for the arrival of Abram Jr. the following year. But our "first family" survived the critical period unhurt; and their later fortune is but a tribute to the genius of a man who met, day after day, the heart-stopping crises of trading with savages, of harnessing



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the untamed wilderness, of fighting against odds for very life.

And this is something of the breathtaking tale behind that unassuming old stonehouse at Stockport Depot, at the mouth of Kinderhook Creek. To see it now, small and grey, the title of luxury once ascribed to it, seems steeped in irony. But, there in the eaves, there in the chinks between the great stones built up against Indian attack, are whisperings of Red Men, and red blood. Those old walls have seen the conquest of a raw nature, in which wild beasts were stalking, and wilder men. And the same quiet old frame has done "all a house can do" to shelter life. Yes, and in its two hundred odd years, perhaps more than any other house our county can boast.

### FATHER ABRAHAM

Those two, old house and now distant Master, are the roots of Columbia's tradition. Major Abraham for his part began the County epic with a chapter we would do well to equal. And his home unconquered by time, whatever its size or worldly fame, is marked a mansion in the annals of achievement.



Home of Luxury (1696)

#### IV

### COLUMBIA HALL

**C**OLUMBIA Hall! A century ago the words represented the epitome of courtly resorts. The Hall was an imposing and brightly buntinged hotel at Lebanon Springs, and was the stage where the nation's "four hundred" tripped away a frivolous caper. Now one turns an eager eye to Saratoga. It's there to the north of us, where the thrilling cavalcade of the Gay is on parade, revelling at "The Sport of Kings," and lightly reclining in the restorative baths. But if an eye to a spent Age may be forgiven, the equivalent of all Saratoga's grandeur promenaded in joyous and splendid procession on the piazzas of Columbia Hall. Those were the days when the mineral



### *COLUMBIA HALL*

springs at Lebanon were the American Elixir of Life. Bath in England had at last found a rival. And the elegant persons free to indulge in the luxury of delicate health, were only outnumbered at the Hall by the blades and Dulcineas who danced a tinkling minuet.

The roots of this success at Lebanon twine through a wealth of lore in early New York. The "Springs" back into dim, unwritten years were the half-mystic haunt of the Indians. They experienced and believed in the wondrous powers of the "healing waters." And to the beneficent pool they directed many a friend in dire need, whose subsequent cure spread farther and farther on the reputation for miraculous power held by this genesis of rejuvenation. About these

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undisputed elements, there has been preserved many a delightful tale. Perhaps the dearest of them all centered about the Revolutionary War soldier, whose hurts had left him but the wreck of a man. An Indian friend bade him haste to Montepoale (its ancient name) to touch the unfailing water. And he, undismayed by the protracted journey, set off for distant Lebanon. Wounded, footsore, he plodded the weary miles from Pennsylvania, bent over his sycamore cane. At length he arrived; and was rewarded for his heroic perseverance by a gift of health from the bountiful springs. And equally marvelous was the fate of his sycamore walking stick. Indeed, this in a measure proves the truth of his cure. For that vibrant stick, as sycamore sometimes will, came to life

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as surely as the Rod of Moses. It took root there beside the Springs, and as a benign, leafy tree shades even today the quiet blue depths of the crystal pool.

This and other such dramatic cures could not escape attention. And as early as 1800 there were accommodations built for the numbers who flocked there to drink a health, or to drink in health, as the case might be. By the quarter century it was famous beyond the limits of this country, for either bent.

Our Springs, in fact, on the question of fame, afford a subject for amusing reflection. The quack is a glorious invention for soothing the unwary. And perhaps he never thrived better than on the plentiful human fodder growing so abundantly in this country. Modern, high-pressure advertising is one outlet. Dr.

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Eustace P. McGargle's snake oil is another. But the compiled prophecies, promises, and professional pronouncements promoting the Lebanon Springs, match any for sheer quackery. "Many eminent physicians," goes the spiel, as recorded in a County History, "acquainted with its properties recommend it (i. e., the baths) for the following, viz.: eczema, flesh-poisoning, scald-heads, arthritis, cutaneous diseases generally \* \* \*." Alas, the world of physicians must fade! And it not only helps the skin, but dips down into the bone to lend ease to arthritis. That's a medicine for you. But we've only begun. The descriptive shuffle never even broke off—"for morbid conditions of the liver, constipation, dyspepsia, chronic and inflammatory rheumatism, bronchitis, diseases of the

### *COLUMBIA HALL*

kidneys, gout, and nervous diseases generally." Glory be! "It ain't gonna' rain no mo'." Bring on cancer and the Bubonic plague! Why there's not a blemish in nature which Lebanon Springs can't cure. Even a prejudiced auditor would be compelled to admit that the place was highly recommended. And now, if I may be permitted to continue the barker's oration as recorded, the climactic argument goes thus: "As a beautifier of the complexion it has few equals, giving the skin a smooth, velvety appearance." Frankly it's baffling. We who consoled ourselves that modern splurging was a consequence of the new demon advertising, see now that the gaudy bill-board is only an old spectre, not even dressed-up in new language.

But in laughing at the amusing ex-



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travagance of this claim that the Lebanon Springs are a cure-all, one must not stifle his appreciation of actual value in the potent water. For it has brought in the past and does today bring health to many a visitor; and I should be most unready to scoff at its proven worth.

And during those years of the early 19th century, the glowing portrayal now advanced by Saratoga, Warm Springs, and other places, of their respective health-giving properties, was directed, with scant dissipation, full upon the luxurious, health-giving quarters at Lebanon. In 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette was given a reception there to such a host of the great and near-great that the floors of Columbia Hall threatened to collapse. Old families of the state and nation made it their favorite ground for lighter

### *COLUMBIA HALL*

pastimes, and healthful vacation. And meetings of the nation's mighty were frequent there, as when the great political enemies (but personal friends) Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay met, flanked by an admiring company of the select. The Adamses knew it well. In fact, choose any names you will, there were few persons of prominence who did not.



*And the Sycamore Grew*



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All this display, and the numbers of fine folk who gathered there, were magnetically attracted by the natural Springs about which so many enchanting legends had grown. In truth, because optimism is the essence of tender years, as are festivity and color—the Lebanon Spring was actually “The Fountain of Youth.”

## V

### WASHINGTON COMES TO CLAVERACK

**P**ICTURE Claverack College as Frank Webb knew it when he wrote of it so confidently in 1882 as "The historic seat of learning \* \* \* yet destined to rank among the great educational centers of the Republic." Over a hundred scholars when the eighteenth century closed, several times that number when the meridian of the next was passed, its fame as a quiet and exclusive institution of learning was almost country-wide. It was vibrant then, with a full, scholarly life. The *alumni* roster carried many a famous name; and Alonzo Flack, long Claverack's head-master, was a personage in his own right, in educational circles. And in another view, to touch a more

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enticing chord, one of the most cherished photos of the College displays the Tennis Courts in front, and on them some graceful young ladies at play. Another shows boating on the pond to the rear of the college buildings. Certainly, there must have been an exquisite social life, fully equal to the College's high scholastic rank. This was in 1882. And but twenty years later came the end. The school ceased to be; and with sacrilegious haste, within a few years, some Hudson wreckers were carting off the remains, sold as salvage.

Thus abruptly, thus tragically, did a delightful part of Columbia County's cultural life die. Many of us have heard fathers, mothers, or uncles who are Claverack graduates, make the doleful comment: "Such a pity!" And they don't

*WASHINGTON COMES TO CLAVERACK*

seem to know quite why it's gone. With educational institutions the law of inertia is potent; and the older they are the more apt to survive still longer. Then well might old Claverack students ask: "Why has it gone?" For its traditions trail far back into the dark days of the Revolutionary War.

In the same year that the glorious guns of Saratoga rang out freedom to northern New York, John Gabriel Gebhard, Dominie of the Dutch Reformed Church of Claverack, organized the Seminary of Washington, the infant school later to become Claverack College. Although George Washington didn't know Claverack, that village knew his spirit in the founding of its Seminary. First in peace, as well as in war! The school

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(seminary meant only a place of study) embodied in its walls and its studies the full measure of that peace spirit which supplants the haste and confusion of war, by deliberation and progress and guidance. In a district where patriot minds were a notch nearer barbarism after the savage experiences of forest strife, this cultural institution filled a large void in life. It put an end to education consisting mainly of the animal cunning which the wild environment demanded. It made possible, in no small measure, an uncommon flowering of genius in the next generation of Columbia County's sons. From the annals of the Rev. Porter of Claverack we glean the information that among the students of Washington Seminary in 1800 were a future Governor of Vermont, a Minister

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to Spain, several Congressmen, Senators, a General of the U. S. Army, more than a few brilliant lawyers, and a President of the United States. Such a little school! Granted that the fine stock in our early citizenry comprised the seeds of such excellence, who could deny that they were duly nourished in their growth because Washington came to Claverack?

It was in 1830 that the Seminary changed name and status. Out of the old institution, then in something of a decline, was born a new one, Claverack Academy. The Academy remained for twenty-four years, during which it served full well as a local institution of intermediate study. But all the same, I feel that it simply played out a part in preserving tradition, in maintaining equili-



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brium, until the arrival of a more glorious successor should carry on the name in its stead.

And so was established in 1854 Claverack College and Hudson River Institute. Headed by the eminent Prof. Alonzo Flack, the institution entered upon the heyday of its fame. Studies in the classic languages, English Grammar and Literature, Rhetoric, Modern Languages, Mathematics. Natural and Physical Sciences, Teaching, were offered; and especially for the young ladies, the college presented Drawing, Music, Painting, the more artistic pursuits. There is, indeed, a liberal education, the possessor of which, I suspect, would humble many a more "practical" scholar of our modern college systems.



### WASHINGTON COMES TO CLAVERACK

And what a delightful atmosphere! Having known another kind of college, perhaps I may be permitted just a moment's envy. None of the tumultuous activity of the great University! Indeed, far less of the dissipation of purpose which our football rivalries (for one) so blatantly cause, and seem gleeful in the causing! **Within** Claverack College was lived a college life. There within the loved bounds of a benign institution, so choicely placed on the bank of a dimpling stream, young men and women found pleasure and gained cultivation of mind and manner; and they ripened, not suddenly or extravagantly, but with grace.

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Now it's gone. One of the old college buildings, the Drill Hall and Assembly, is being used as a packing

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house; and it seems somehow like the desecration of a grave. We know, of course, that things grow old, and that the living die; so that there is no surprise. But all the same, one may decline to stifle four words, so brimful of regret: "It is a pity."



*The Graceful Way*

## VI

### ALMOST A HUNDRED

“**W**HO will be the next to outwit me?”

wheedles the three-shell artist, his fist too well-trimmed with bills for a mere game of chance. Or perhaps — “Right this way for Sandra the serpent girl! Also Glondo who swallows swords. See them all, a hundred freaks of nature!” Fanfare, tinsel, and tents! It has a call, somehow, and hiding all incredulity for the time, one can lose proportion deliciously in the full chorus of spectacular sham on display. But that’s only a small part of it. When the bright banner is flaunted over Labor Day, once again one stomps gaily through the pens to pay a call to our four-footed company; none to be skipped whether they

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bleat, whinny, or grunt. Our great grand-fathers knew it, much as it's been ever since. And this September we shall view it again, in the Chatham Fair.

It was in 1841, the year a saddened Martin Van Buren returned to Kinderhook to stay, that the County farmers first brought out their "prides" for show. Hand-bills read, "Cattle-show and Fair;" but could have said with equal truth, "Farmers gather 'round." And they came, indeed—in those days to Hudson. Our Court House yard, where the judging of classes was held, must have been a tumultuous scene, looking as if Noah were starting to rebuild the Ark at the southerly end of Fourth Street, and had gotten all the animals ready first. Cattle lumbered about. Here plodded a drey-horse, and there a sleek "stepper" minc-

*ALMOST A HUNDRED*

ed his nervous way. Swine too, and sheep, and goats milled about, all of them, you may be sure, emitting whatever yells are favorite to their natures. And rich exhibitions of the fruit of tree and furrow made County residents puff with pride. Such a display in the 1860's makes clear the reason the North had stability and strength, which a half-starved enemy to the South could only envy.

These farm elements are the frame upon which the County Fair structure is built. Whatever else attaches itself is only an appendage, though it be as fascinating an appendage as the quick-clopping trotters who fire their heaving sides as they race over the sanded stretch. This central theme of agriculture may account for its survival now after nearly



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a century. And such difficulties! Wars, political dissention with Hayes-Tilden, and more private troubles! In 1853, the treasurer's report notes a disconcerting loss, an item which debited \$36.25 for counterfeit money. Someone should tell Mr. Roosevelt. But troubles fell away, on the path, because the Fair is true to nature. And where not, its holiday attire serves only to enhance its original appeal, and augment its purpose.

The Fair surely hums with activity. And there, many a year, have been attracted the brilliant political figures of the nation. Once, in a day our fathers remember well, "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, a fiery Senator from the South, poured out his burning soul to the crowded "Stand." Another time George Mc-

*ALMOST A HUNDRED*

Clellan, Mayor of New York City, and son of the Civil War general, was introduced to the Columbia Fair by his Chatham namesake. And who could forget the immortal "T. R." during the World War? He thumped out one of his most vigorous speeches, and received the plaudits of his thousands, standing among such Columbia County friends, as "Old Lou" Payn and Martin Glynn. Through the years, to the speakers' stand have come scores of the great and near-great, who declaimed precious words, but a too-thirsty wind drank them in, to be heard and known no more. Yet the moment was richer for their presence. And of such moments are lives fashioned and histories written. Those orators, many of them, gave truly the best and finest their minds and lives could produce. And



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this very night, perhaps, at the old fair-ground, such a ghost will be gliding fondly over a spot made dear to him because there he once spoke a line which was his heart and his philosophy.

And there's more to a Fair! Out of sense, deep into nonsense. Some years, a trackful of snorting speed-cars offers a breath-taking spectacle. Trapeze acts and jugglers! Too, there is the fuzzy, red clown and his exploding Model-T, named Dyna-might. Count on them for a glorious "hit and run" scene, completely mashing the futile clown. What's more, this extraordinary vehicle is quite ingenious, quite able to outwit its driver with ease at every turn. And the final bomb-burst leaves a somewhat dizzy comedian heaped hopelessly in the pile of distorted tin that was Dyna.

*ALMOST A HUNDRED*

And one always pokes into tents down the Mid-way. In one, some Bowery Egyptian will be toying carelessly with villainous-looking reptiles, to be touched only by the brave, and that gingerly. Farther on, watch the monkeys ride racing cars mile-a-minute around the little autodrome. Amid a deafening racket you can make out the cute little fellow, clinging wildly to his machine, and wishing hard no doubt, that he'd enough hands left to stop his ears. Shoot some crooked rifles! Knock down cats and dolls! Try all the rides! Making an excited trip along the gilded way, means an armful of shining and worthless frippery, prizes won at great cost in a contest against odds, and therefore not to be regarded lightly. And food! Indigestible morsels, enough to ruin a

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dozen homes, are eaten with zest and carried with full complacence throughout the tour to its tired and happy end. Do it all, and be the real son of your forefathers, for to them, it was a big day of the year.

One reflects on our County Fair with mingled emotions. Sometimes the central theme is lost to an observer who has no care for the life represented there. Perhaps he has never tramped into the pens to eye quizzically a litter of tumbling, black piglets. Maybe he never "tested out" a ram, by waving a hand before him till the beast battered furiously at the place whence said tester had thoughtfully and instantly removed his hand, quite satisfied that the thumping dealt to the stall siding is proof enough. And the bicker of chickens! Long rows of

*ALMOST A HUNDRED*

them, some quick and clucking, others dozing, as lazy as their perfection permits. Then too, doesn't he see, really see, the rich harvest of farm products, whose presence is mute evidence that men planned and worked long months, to bring this prize of their struggle to our view? Such is the Fair. Nothing more. For what is all the rest but a series of thoughtless, empty pastimes? Yet,—pity the man who can't, on occasion, look tinsel full in its fiber, and call it gold.

## VII

### HOUSES OF STRAW

WE are taught to mourn the passing of the American frontier. Even contemporary music seeks to capture the lilting rhythm of that soulful "Wild West," a West which is close to our hearts as a national drama, too intense and too grand to be forgotten. But growing America never exhibited a truer chapter than one our own county incloses. A local industry, which disappeared with the rise of new methods and cheaper products, retains in its ruins the jeweled plot to a gripping tale. Drama in a mill has admittedly an unusual setting. For somehow, a mill sounds dark, humdrum, and sweaty. But it is life. Only a child could fail to

### *HOUSES OF STRAW*

know of it. And the vital communities clustered about the paper-mills along our county creeks were the scrolls upon which fine men and women wrote their names and works, "The short and simple annals of the poor."

Straw paper! Rye straw was the stuff they used, as clean and fresh as fruit of the earth may be. Our numerous grain farmers counted the straw paper industry as a sure and valuable market for their rye by-product. And once carted to the mill yard, it could be cooked, bleached, washed, and cut fine enough to make a pulpy-mass — which when properly pressed and dried was the paper known throughout the country for wrapping purposes. Think! In the small area of this county were some



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twenty such mills. And about each were clustered the simple homes of the people whose lives were there, part and parcel of the mill.



“His Castle”

Rugged individualism, in its true application, is no misnomer, as these paper mills were vivid illustration. No corporation was the power involved. Look over the names, and see in most cases that a man was the owner, organizer,



### *HOUSES OF STRAW*

and administrator of each mill. He personally hired the other men whose labor made the wheels turn. And his was no armchair job. Into the mill he went, applying his own muscles, commonly, to plaguey obstructions. That relationship, that personal element, typifies the industrial system of adolescent America. That was a day when men could know an independence which our more complicated world, to a large degree, but remembers with a sigh of regret.

Independence! It was the rule of home as well. From birth to the grave a doctor and his hospital were little known, and usually cared about even less. "Boughten clothes" made a rare luxury. And the kitchen was a veritable institution, little subject to the pampering conveniences of our "canned" age. It had an

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oven. And Aladdin might have envied it. For don't the oldsters hint dreamily of the crisp, golden pies "Mother made;" or a dinner of nutmeg brown pork, with potatoes in their jackets, and applesauce; or of hot new bread, melting the butter for you; or of that dish which visitors say is peculiar to these parts, pancakes with a smothery, tasty, milk and sausage gravy. So goes the dream. And alas, poor Aladdin!

Indeed the little community was as self sufficient as might be. Most of its residents, all the year, lived out the solid life of their class, hard-working, sedentary, content. It was to these, remember, that the great English poet referred as "their country's pride." Here is strength, stability, and simple virtue.

Somewhere in the New York Reports

### *HOUSES OF STRAW*

a trial is recorded, from which may be culled the pith of reality, the essence of the true drama, so deep in the fibre of life, even a mill-life. Tom Smith (not his real name) was discharged. The little mill-house which was his home, he was ordered to leave. "Quit it," he cried, "the discharge is unfair, and in the house I and my family stay as my contract declares we may." To the mill-owner the family was simply an obstacle to be removed. So calling aid to his side, the owner entered, swept aside the good wife, and proceeded crudely to the cruel business of eviction. Tom was summoned. He was enraged. Such insulting treatment of his family! And added to the injury of unfair discharge! When the intruder refused flatly to discontinue his abuse, Tom had had more

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than he could stand. His rule was the instinctive law of nature: protect home, no matter what other laws may be broken. And protect the home even if the intruder is a boss. Tom Smith seized the nearest weapon to his hand, a great axe, and to the landlord, who met his threat with a pistol, he dealt a savage blow. He cut off, not a right ear as Peter did, but a stout left arm.

Harshest of measures! It was product of an unlettered manhood in a hard life. It might be the fury of a distant, harsher age; or of a soldier in our own. For somehow, in his act there was something rudely noble. A man's home is his castle, and the true knight never left such a dear charge defenseless, no matter what tyrant besieged the walls. The trial Judge was aware of the extenuat-

### HOUSES OF STRAW

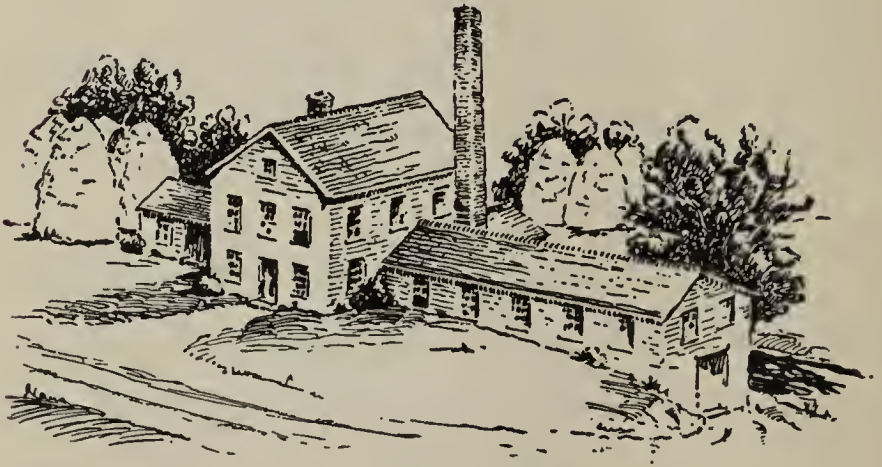
ing circumstances, and, when imposing but a six months sentence, asked the defendant, in a soothing tone, if he were sorry for his deed. Tom Smith raised his head, and firmly convinced that his stand was a just one, spoke out clearly: "Sorry? I'm sorry I didn't cut off the villain's head." And then the startled Court made the sentence two years and a half.

How unbelievable, that life could be so real and yet so passing! A few vivid episodes cry out the being of hearts and minds which think, and feel, more quietly in the evenness of living. These people **lived**. And how do we know it now? Their fibre passed into sons, who sometimes became great. So, you may say, we haven't lost them quite.



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But themselves! Their day, where is that? And the full throated song of their prosperous mills? These are whisked away by the years, as if they, like their paper, were only so much straw.



**When Straw Stacked High**



## VIII

### INN AND OUT

**T**HE night is coldly clear, and a chill

November wind bustles wildly about, hampered not a whit between here and the stars. Against frosty roads a clack-clack of sharp-beating hooves comes clearer, and sometimes creaking protests from the lumbering coach, resentful of such speed, join in. But there is no slack for weak complaints. The driver glues his eyes to the silver stream of road which he knows too well for timidity. And a night so cool against their wide nostrils makes great horses like these love to run, and they blow back into the wind a steamy puff of their own, just to urge it more. But for a twisty dip and the bridge, they must go

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slower. There sounds a cavernous rumble as they cross, and then once again they gather speed, for there's but a little distance to go. Up to the cross-roads they dash, and into the Inn-drive, all one grand bustle. Coach-party and Inn-keeper exchange a cheery salvo, as their boot heels crunch on the gravel near the small porch, the new comers warmer already for hot punch waiting. And they know of old that the Brick Tavern never fails a gentleman whose parts are chill for want of a noggin.

Built in 1812, to Post Road travelers the Brick Tavern was a haven famed the length of the River; and as its name suggests the brick of its walls made it unique in this area. Down cellar in the rear were the rich-yielding kitchens. And thence, by the stairs to the ground floor

### *INN AND OUT*

came the gentlemen's hot dinners on trays worthy of a greater name. It was a cozy house by any rule. Three beaming fire places were warm to see as well as feel, and as many smoking chimneys on the roof corners beckoned to travelers along the roads for a mile. First floor rooms were gathering spots—easy parlors and a bar. And if you wonder about sleeping space, besides two private rooms the great second floor "ball-room" was curtain-divided and could house a squadron. Complete and comfortable within, the stables across the way were a match. And the post teams which stopped regularly, or private carriage prancers, were fed and groomed and bedded with the care shown their masters.

Dr. Johnson was wont to declare that an inn was the acme of hospitality, for

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nowhere else could a man be so expansively comfortable. Why, he argued, the more cheer you make, and the more good things you order, the more welcome you become. An Inn! Something with which our age has small acquaintance, and we admit it with regret. "Mein host" used to be a portly friend to his guests. No smiling manager who snuggles his desk too closely to befriend a soul! And the atmosphere comes down to us in terms of nut brown ale, a roaring fire, and politics hot as the snapping logs on the andirons. Travel was a rarer business then. And men, in the main, professed it. Perhaps such truths are sign that these oases of our ancestors were a joy which they took away for their own. And I wonder if we have one akin, that our generations to come

## INN AND OUT

will view with equal envy. Tourist Cabins! They are peculiar to this decade, but what like grace can they claim? Bare and friendless, they are altogether too similar in aspect to a village of bees to have dignity. And I suspect as well, that a last century visitor might uncurl a chuckle with his comment: "What, no half-moons!" Perhaps time will lend them enchantment. For the sake of our pride, I hope so.

Who called at the Brick Tavern? Perhaps, the easier question to pose would be: Who didn't? The road between Claverack village and Kinderhook was likewise the highway to Albany from New York. Statesmen enroute to the Capitol invariably passed there, and an enumeration would be simply a staggering endeavor. The Clintons, a Living-



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ston, Jay or Van Buren — any of them might be among the party whose brisk coach we saw drive in. Around these hearths many a campaign was plotted for the subtle wars of state. And who knows but many a political giant was “born” in the Brick Tavern parlors, and just as many dwarfed in defeat. It’s all gone now, yesterday’s fact not any easier to recall than the little porch which a later owner chose to remove. But the substantial building is there. Age alone wins it respect. And far beyond mere existence it had a halcyon life studded with glamorous characters and historic moments.

In the morning our coach is packed up for the trip to Albany. Amid a terrific clatter, while the horses champ impatiently at the bit, the party is again



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incased in their box-on-wheels. Then away! Over the frosty roads they bounce for a mile or more before they can see over their shoulders to the left, the placidly prone figure of our "Man-of-the-Mountain." He's so content, he old enough to know about everything, that they feel without more ado that all's right with their world — which is our world, too.



The Brick Tavern



The High Falls

## IX

### MYSTIC WATER

**H**OW many quiet centuries the dashing stream has spilled happily over the rocks to fall one hundred and fifty feet, perhaps we shall never know. Silent Indians must have found a stolid joy in its torrential beauty, long before the "white" sun rose. What revels they held, about that swirling pool deep-pounded in solid rock, only one who has drunk deeply of their lore can say. And since their day paler boys, boys whom we know, have swum gleefully in the same cool depths. Indeed, few wonders of our own or any other neighborhood can equal this most exuberant of water creations, the High Falls in Philmont.

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Till a century ago it danced away untamed. But genius chanced by. And his magic hand fashioned a harness for the unbroken stream, which schooled it to the rule of men. Its great fall, impracticable for machinery as nature left it, designed for beauty alone, the brilliant engineer George P. Philip led by canals over six successive falls, to lend water power to as many mills by his artificial contrivance. And for once industry thrived at small expense to nature. For the great Falls, in spite of this drain, boomed out their eternal music among the trees, deep and unbroken, while the mills added a new harmony, a little off to the West.

Men have always been humble before the mysterious majesty of water. Far

### MYSTIC WATER

back in antiquity, at the Flood, or a tractless ocean, many puny heroes trembled abashed. And in a greater age, less given to fear, thoughtful men remain modest as ever toward the bubbling stuff, because of what it is, and does. It lights America, and it brings, genii-like, the riches of the Orient into our laps. But nearer to our door, it transformed a forest into a thriving village, made some men rich, and many men happy. In those words lies the essential magic of Philip's Mountain, so blessed in its water gods who turned a smiling eye on its transformation.

In the lore of Philmont, on the more practical side, two strata of men wrote or engraved a tale. First, because more people know them, come the grand figures of the men who led the way.



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Philip was one. A successor, more typical of the array who built higher the great structure this founder began, was ingenious Nelson P. Aken, whose success matched his rosiest dreams. Starting with a tiny mill in the "boom times" of the Civil War, in four years he amassed a staggering capital, and built a great plant whose employment roll of three hundred made it one of the largest in the State. And only ten years later he erected another twice as huge, which has been ever since one of the greatest knitting mills in existence. What's more, his fertile brain conceived several inventions, both mechanical and chemical, which were contributions essential to the rapid growth of an industry then adolescent. Indeed, they made his own huge-scale operations possible.



### MYSTIC WATER

There is a reliable anecdote which reveals, I think, the fibre of the man. A Hudson bank backing his ventures felt obliged to recall their loans to Aken, a great many thousands of dollars. But one morning he strode into a Directors' Meeting with the calm statement: "Gentlemen, I must have ten thousand dollars today." Imagine the sputtering confusion of that Board! Protests jammed forth till he quieted them with a command; and then made himself clear: "Will you loan these paltry thousands more, or lose the entire advance? Take your choice." And he got the ten thousand that day.

Such was Nelson Aken, and in lesser degrees, his fellow "greats." But they were no truer part of the village, born of the water power which made its in-

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dustury possible, than the second stratum of men, whose fortune was cast on more normal lines. When Aken's "Old Mill" was under construction, high on the scaffolding, Pat was hard at work. He was an ambitious fellow; and though new to America, he'd already saved the money required to bring his family across the ocean from his erstwhile home. Perhaps even then he was musing about their coming, and the happy times their reunion promised. Perhaps, there aloft, he was indulging in a little justifiable pride at his own part in the success of it all. But it may be, that he lost himself in reverie a little too deeply, for he tumbled head-long—to muse no more. When two weeks after, a wife and four children arrived, all expectant, excited, and happy, they were met by the bruised

### MYSTIC WATER

ing fact that the fountain of their fortune had been blotted dry. And their laughter they exchanged for hot tears.

Such unfamed tragedy provides the minor chord heard in the hum of industry; and so, little known but equally keen successes "other men" of Philmont knew. They too were woven into the village fabric,—they the warp, while Philip and Aken and such leaders comprised the woof. It is a human epic, vast in its ramifications, in spite of being confined to land limits we have come to count but small.

And every soul who ever lived in Philmont was there because of the High Falls. That made the factories possible. And their success brought in the employees and entrepreneurs who came to

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live. The power of water! The magic of a waterfall! Were ever beauty, majesty, and might more divinely captured by mere substance? True. But not quite as true to us as to those who lived by it and because of it in a lost year. Cobwebbed windows, and rusted machinery are the dour signs of decay which meet our eyes. And the mills' wheels no longer turn because a watery steed gallops over a raceway. Once again, as in the guileless aeons before genius chanced there, the stream splashes on its merry way quite unfettered, the old servitude to man's ambition quite lost in a new freedom.

## X

### SMOKEY HOLLOW

AT least half the delight in poking about among old things is the "nosy" joy of peeking upon men who are quite unwary, and therefore free and natural. No one puts on, and they can't defend themselves. Did a back-biter ever dream of such paradise? But alas for the pains of the truly curious! Are men ever what they seem? Whoever knew all of another's mind, with its recesses kept for secret, lone communion; and much less, minds a century distant? Really we don't. More important, we don't have to. For they who can't defend themselves, wouldn't bother if they could. And besides, there are few who poke, who don't grant to the men who live

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again for our pleasure, at least their due. Re-create whenever we can the pleasure of it, the lesson of it is seldom curbed by a hurt.

It's difficult to appreciate the fact that Hollowville of old was just such a life stage where a substantial troupe trod the boards with the eager, awkward walk of reality, so inferior in grace to the careful art of the theatre-stage. Three taverns, several mills, and the descriptive phrase "large hamlet," in a County History, attest to an affluence which Hollowville has not known for many a year. In fact, it's glory was a past thing in the only record of it (the record itself nearly 60 years old) we have, so that the tale today is one doubly steeped in "has-been-ity."



### *SMOKEY HOLLOW*

But all about it lie intriguing secrets, some of them secret only because nobody has bothered to know them any longer. Fancy a hamlet carrying the name "Smokey Hollow" not being captor to some of the lore its name suggests! And not till 1867 did proud sons of ruder fathers stoop to the dignity of the new title, Hollowville.

One dramatic incident draws immediate attention. Men's fortunes rise and then set, no less naturally than the Sun. And the short history of "Smokey Hollow" has a picture, which is a very climax in futility. The man was Christopher Gernon, owner of a little mill. Not from one of the famous families, this enterprise, no doubt, marked the height in capital to which he had attain-

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ed. But locally his was an enviable position. He had the prestige allowed an employer, and was happily engaged in a prosperous venture. And before him lay—well, what not !!! Remember, that such men were often lifted to dizzy heights of success on the swelling tide of growing America! Why not this one?

The servant of his mill was water-power turning a “bucket” wheel there in the brook. And for a long time the stream worked faithfully. But '69 was Christopher's year of destiny, when Spring rains bred a flood. For fury there's no match for the silent man, once roused. And gentle, pleasant water, once excited to villainy is murderous, and a vandal. Drunkenly, remorselessly, this bloated new-river dashed a man's

### *SMOKEY HOLLOW*

fortune to the ground, and turned a mill into rotten debris to litter its banks. When the stream again became the sober rivulet of normalcy, a bitter voice might be heard accusing its every bubble, thus too late returned to governance.

And what stops the mouth quite dumb more quickly than a death, sudden and undeserved? Once again to the brief page of Smokey Hollow! We hear so much of the lordly ways and majestic calm of the Manor folk who bestrode much of the Hudson Valley, that to learn of the hot strife of anti-rent wars may come a complete surprise to many. But men who lived by the land, cared for it, and loved it from father to son, rose in fury against paying over a fief

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which was unnatural in a democracy, and only backed by the scribble of a pen long since turned to dust. In their fury they rioted. And one ill-fated day their riot centered on Miller's Inn at the "Hollow." Decked in Indian dress, war-whoops and paint simply spurred a dangerous alliance by giving it the ostrich-concealment of masks. The accursed, unthinking mob! From out of it came waving pistols. Bystanders who had gathered to see the "Indians'" antics were such targets as sheep make, crowding about all unwary. Without warning a gun belched, and death rode up to claim its prize, only a boy. They were not bad men, perhaps with a cause; and the shot was an accident. But there was death! And the melted crowd sent home many a startled, wretched fellow, aware

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too late of their folly. And aside from legal arguments or rents, Smokey Hollow had written one day on its scroll with the dark red ink of tragedy.

Back there Smokey Hollow had a fresh vitality, and its life was transcribed in unfaded colors. But how amazingly varied are the effects of an innovation! Railroad building was to much of America a boon, swelling business to a flood. Farmers, given a ready market, and no longer to bemoan the distance to a Mississippi, a Hudson, or the Great Lakes and canal. But there was many a thriving community left outside this pale of prosperity. And such successes as the natural blessing of rich land, a stream for power, or a post-road gave were lopped off, to slide downward into dismal stagnation. Smokey Hollow in the 1840's and



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'50's was one of the more enterprising settlements of the county. It was on the Columbia Turnpike, a chief route to the East. It had among its citizens manufacturers of wool, satinets, and flannels. And there were a grist mill, a machine shop, a saw mill, a gun manufactory, and a cradle industry. No wonder they needed three taverns. But when the railroad drew the carrying traffic away from the turnpike, the Hollow was injured. And the mill-competition from towns which enjoyed the shipping advantage of a nearby railway, simply dissipated its erstwhile prosperity. It grew quieter and quieter. For a long time, since about 1880 in fact, it's been just the tiny hamlet we know—a keeper of old secrets, for there aren't any new ones.



## XI

### NEITHER HERE NOR THERE

**T**HERE is only one road from Massachusetts into New York which, in the crossing, doesn't go up hill—and down. It winds its dusty way from Stockbridge to Canaan, through a notch between the Taghkanic Range and the Berkshires. Crooked it is, tracing the vagaries of the rolling hills, but it's almost literally level. And in past years, when carries meant horse-teams and wagons, curves were no obstacle at all, as long as the weary beasts didn't have to "plug along" up the side of a mountain. That was why this particular route, in the old days, was so frequented. You see, teams could haul easily to Chatham from Eastern producers, and thence to Hudson for a

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water trip to New York, and the world. Hundreds and hundreds of teams passed along it. In part, at least, they explain the existence of the old hotel which adorns the State boundary line. Its name was and is the State Line House, though now it smothers all the sparkling experiences it has witnessed, in the sheltered existence of a private dwelling.

It rather startles the imagination to hear that the spot where the State Line House has spent its unique hundred years was once an island. But it was. And the railroad bed, and the turnpike, and the land nearby were all under water. However the seemingly wierd tale has a rational, if delightful explanation. Back in the middle of the 18th century, and the Lord knows how much

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earlier, a colony of enterprising beavers set up their city a little distance from the site of the House. And these little, four-footed engineering geniuses constructed a magnificent dam. The notch was flat you remember, and the water quickly pooled there for a remarkable distance, drowning many a good rod of land. Instead of dull earth, it was a rippling pond where a chubby beastie could disport to his heart's content. But even at that, the beaver had a necromantic care for the future two-State hotel. That one spot of ground remained all the while peeping just a bit over the flood, dry against the splendid day when busy men (mostly laughing in the tavern) would troop through here their interesting way.

But the beaver was a fated race.

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Sometime later, in pitched battle the Stockbridge Indians annihilated them every one, and shipped away their glossy pelts that fine ladies of the Continent might swagger. So disappeared their dam and its pool. It's true that a shrewd settler admired and imitated their work, and built a similar dam for his saw-mill. But its life was short. And then the impatient creek, too long delayed, skipped hurriedly off to join the Housatonic River. The land soon dried. And settlers came in such increasing numbers that they built a road in order to reach the Hudson River and the ports abroad, with their labor's fruits. With that effort our own time is in progress; for not long after came the State Line House.

The bar! No lawyer need ever look up from his Blackstone, for there was

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nothing figurative about an oaken bar which was the soul of the State Line House. Legend has it that it reached from one end of the building to the other. And not without plan! Since it was besieged by an army of travelers east and west, and by the parched throughout the district, it had to be big; but that's only part of it. Blue-law Massachusetts sometimes put finicky, indefensible oddities into its liquor tax statutes. Then the enterprising "Prop." would use the New York half of his oaken sill; and business went on as usual. And should there rise complications of an uncertain nature in this terrain, bottles, glasses, and chuckling bartender shuttled back across the border—to the other half of the room. There it was, absolutely fool proof! And the two



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States were much too ornery ever to be Victorian during the same period.

Even revelry at State Line had its unique bent. When of a week end the ore beds and marble works disgorged their drudges, an avalanche of grinning pay-day men swept down on the hotel, keen to fuzzle a little extra for lost time. Bar-room opera produced a full-throated chorus. And as often as not one could look for a minor military operation. Ham fists fly fast when nicely oiled by some top-notch tar-barrel spirits. And sometimes a blousey-headed constable would pit his thimble wit against such lawlessness. But he might far better have hepped off to run down a rabbit. Accompanied by tumultuous roaring and the effulgence of tin stars, he'd push his futile way into the jam,



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one great big hurry. And Satan must have chortled to see. For when our constable finally got to eye the culprits, there they were, choicely planted in the other State. And oh, the gall of it! His brawlers would straightway become quite happy in the common sport of heaping scornful mud on his art and ancestry.

More roseate were the State Line romances. And they were no idle dreaming of a rural story-teller. A gentleman living near there grins quizzically every time he tells about his blood aunt, a school-teacher, who boarded at the Hotel. She was, over and again, a witness. Not a peeper, mind you, but legal witness to a ceremony! Perhaps too, she wept many a sleepless tear over the maxim: "Often a bridesmaid, never a

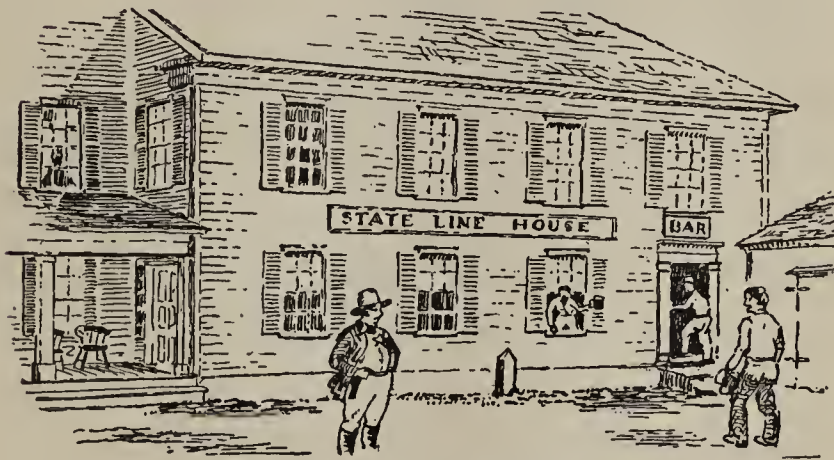
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bride!" But, at any rate, when eager doves, impatient as Juliet, would drive post-haste to the two-State inn, to benefit by time allowances across the border, she played her drooping role of observer. And fancy the giggling thrill of it. The good clergyman was quite too circumspect to act outside his district, and he had to stay in Massachusetts, while a radiant, if legal-minded couple, stood expectantly before him, just over the line in Canaan, New York. Why our State Line House ranked with the Dover Road as path to bliss extraordinary. And may we here record a mild huzza for the jolly persons whose romantic irregularities afford such entertaining diversion.

In these dull days, darn it all, the old hotel is stilled by a mantle of pri-

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vacy. And think of the deprivation! Why, the best chance ever to thumb a fondly disparaging nose at a foiled trooper, is gone. And shucks, what fun we could all have playing witness! And when the bar stretches into two States, who says there wouldn't be sport enough to go around!



*Where States and People Meet*

## XII

### TEVIOTDALE

**T**HE first view I had of it was at sundown. And the gray old house enjoyed the last rich warmth of the sun, for which luxury, like an elderly man, it seemed quietly grateful. But there was no sign of weakness. It knew the pride of successful age. More than one hundred and fifty, and its career far from closed, it might well bask in the sun. There, high up on the third story were two windows, whose tops are bow-shaped arches; and they seemed, truly, the raised eyebrows of an aristocrat among mansions. It stood, looking loftily down on the sudden valley which dips sharply from the rear of the house. And so intently did it gaze that I wondered at what; and then looked, too. The pros-

### TEVIOTDALE

pect was worthy of the old critic who has watched for a century and a half! Rich green shades blended one into another. While here and there a russet patch made a floor, smooth as a carpet, imitate something of a carpet's rare design. And about the edge were clumps of trees as if to mark this center floor for a special velvet which no mean step might touch. Higher on the hill a homely cow could moo dolefully wherever it would. But down in the deep hollow of this soft bowl of green, there was not, and must never be, an intruding foot to disturb its serenity. Thus, lost in contemplation of a splendid landscape, I found the proud mansion of an ancient family, "Teviotdale" — where a century ago lived Robert Fulton.

This substantial place was built by



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Walter Livingston, before the Revolution. At that early date, he cloaked it in the dignity of his family, and of his personal achievement. True to his noble line, he served his country in the Revolution. And moreover in New York State annals he was a significant figure, powerful in the Assembly, and its Speaker. As well as serving in the Continental Congress of 1784, he was Commissioner of the United States Treasury. You see, Walter Livingston's honors lend their greatness to his home. And when he brought to Teviotdale his bride, the charming Cornelia Schuyler, she carried with her the courtly refinement of a second gentle family, and so, graced the mansion with an unique hospitality.

But for all that, this first chapter was but introductory in the annals of



### TEVIOTDALE

the grand old house. Out of the unknown came a character, Robert Fulton, and without support of family, fortune, or (as yet) fame, swept dramatically into the great halls of Teviotdale. His challenging figure, his magnificent achievement, more than anything else, are its pride. And who could restrain a fond admiration for the man? Who but feels regret to see the record of his life in Columbia County so carelessly neglected?

Fulton, ingenious fellow, has been described as "nature's gentleman." He moved with engaging grace in the choicest circles of America, and as intimately with nobility abroad. Isn't it rather breath-taking to find a man, lost in his search of invention during years of constant labor, yet able to consort in de-

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lightful friendship with a President of the Royal Academy! Think of him being entertained by the Courtenays of Powderham Castle! See him arm-in-arm with the Duke of Bridgewater, and with Lord Stanhope, the third Earl of that name. That was Robert Fulton as he lived, acclaimed for his genius, and loved for his splendid person.

His sponsor and dear friend of many years was Chancellor Livingston, a man of vision, as hotly fired as Fulton himself by the possibilities of the steamboat. Their long intimacy is a tribute to the character of each of them. And were ever wealth, influence, and talent more happily combined! Statesman and inventor! These extraordinarily successful men, in mutual honor, gave to the world

### TEVIOTDALE

the first great impetus to modern instant transportation.

And then, there was Harriet Livingston! In the first years of the 19th century her beauty and radiant charm were something of a contemporary legend. And up the Hudson, to the place a mile or so out of Linlithgo, came the amazing Robert Fulton in suit of the hand of the latest, lovely Livingston. Her home, you see, was at Teviotdale. And though 1806 was a year before his renown burst upon the world, Fulton carried there a compelling excellence. Traveled, admired, and admittedly an ingenious experimenter in marine mechanics! His works included a steamboat and a submarine, both of which were fairly to astonish the age. And more, he was master of the subtle art of the

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canvas. He painted portraits and landscapes in the years of his youth; and for your pleasure he could sketch whatever you would, quickly as the pencil moves. The captivating Harriet was captivated in turn. There, deep in the courtly elegance of Manor aristocracy, Fulton made the radiant lady his bride.

Local residents call the place, still: "Robert Fulton's house." He didn't build it. So busy in New York and abroad, his days there must have been very few. Yet his is the name which abides. And the house is his now, simply because he was the most glamorous of all the great figures identified with the old stone of this gray and ancient mansion.

Hard against the rear wall, there crowds today a heavy willow tree, whose gnarled trunk pushes out its twisted

### TEVIOTDALE

branches, looking for all the world like the torso of a hunchback. It's an ugly deformity, and matched only by the malice it bodes. For it seems to growl: "Too much allowed to one so old. Push over." But above it, aristocratic, unyielding as ever, rises the old manse. And down upon the rich countryside it continues to gaze, fine and stalwart for the years to come.



Teviotdale



### XIII

#### A LOCAL CHAMELEON

**N**OTHING stays the same, they tell me.

Even a grass blade to a telescopic eye betrays this constant shifting of forces in its infinitesimal cells. But for sheer wracking revolution, Hudson may point a wondering finger to the red brick building on the open mall at the corner of Fourth Street and Warren. It looks harmless, and perhaps it is. But in its day that old place has drunk in so much in sheer variety of human experience, that one starts in astonishment.

Even its pre-natal influences enforced a certain uniqueness. For far back in 1785, on that very spot, stood a log jail. It sounds rustic. But the record speaks proudly of "iron gratings and a heavy



*A LOCAL CHAMELEON*

door," so that we know surely that for all its quaintness it meant full sternly to achieve the purpose of incarceration. Who knows how many a future P. T. Barnum cooled himself there for a spell of rumination? Yes, and with few of the cheering comforts of home, I'll wager, for the day of Warden Lawes was as yet undreamed of; and a dusky, dirt-floor rookery was the lot of the condemned.

Then on a day of 1805 came the new order. The County seat was transferred from Claverack to the City of Hudson, and straightway rose a great jail, able to enclose the mis-dealers of an entire county. Of certain of those transgressors the spooks must still be floating about; for their operations were ghastly.

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In 1817, through the machinery of justice was sifted a defendant. It was a ghoulish woman, charged with the blood of a child. Defense lawyers argued hotly for her; they presented her case in the hopeless effort to assault an array of heinous evidence. A jury of fellow-citizens pronounced the dire word: "Guilty!" And into a dark cell she flung—to wait. Yes, to wait for the seventeenth of October, when she was dragged forth a wailing, nerveless wretch, to meet her miserable doom. The corner of Fourth Street! When next you pass there, see gathered a thirsty throng ready to view that most searing exhibition, a public execution. A clergyman observed the rites. Law's forms were followed as prescribed. And, amid a deafening hush, the fatal act, bloody

### *A LOCAL CHAMELEON*

and severe, was done in the cause of justice. One died that the nation might live.

For a period, too, our old "red brick" became a Court House. And still the scales of justice were hung there, for the chill business of enforcing law. The old walls resounded to order's gavel and echoed the excited, ringing pleas of attorneys, and mayhap their bickerings. Once here, a President's son swung fists with opposing counsel; and spent, for his pains, a night of chagrin in jail. Prince John Van Buren! Whose escapades clouded his genius, as of a slightly "damaged archangel," who could be a brilliant lawyer and stoop to a court room brawl. But then our ancient building changed again. In 1855 the county moved its business off elsewhere, and to

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replace it came — no greater change — Davis Hall.

Instead of faces, frightened or intense, at the window, the tone of our place was changed to gay. Bills promised untold ecstatic entertainment. And a new stage was host to traveling companies presenting sterling “drammers of the hills.” They had their sugary beauties, and an arch villain with his prize sneer and wierd mustachio. But he was betrayed most of all by his funeral garb. You see, in those days, a villain not in black was no fun at all. And with all his machinations, tying innocents to buzzsaws, and wrecking trains and homes with equal abandon, he met more than his match in “True Blue Harold.” Dash! Brawn! Oodles of Luck! A whirl-wind curtain never failed to find everybody

### *A LOCAL CHAMELEON*

happy but the villain—and the stars and stripes waved furiously amid deafening applause.

During the years when the County Fair was held in Hudson, old Davis Hall was right in the center of things. Some one was sure to make a speech there. And the see-ers milled around to view such of the displays as were best held indoors.

I understand, too, that now and then came a wandering minstrel troupe. Mr. Bones told of his wild experience on a fast-runnin' hoss, when he almost "runned-down" a lady. "Why Mr. Interlocutor, ef ah hadn't lunged so fah to mah right, I'd 'a killed that woman. An guess what! Ah fell plumb out o' bed." And they sang or played all the favorites, in a day when favorites could be



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remembered without the help of a printed sheet. And a trouper worth his salt could not only sing, dance, or joke, but "double in brass" to pipe a merry tune for the company when need be. The old "Hall" matched Cap'n Hawk's Showboat in color, and fun. And in trooped the county people to hiss and cheer with the fortunes of the play; to hum with the minstrel chorus; to lose themselves a while in a make-believe world too rich to forget, but so hard to remember.

How odd it seems that within those same brick walls great machines hum at the work of a daily newspaper! Once bitter murder lay there. And joy danced in, happily unaware of anything but the moment's thrill. Today it's a buzz of flying wheels and pistons, busy at the



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mystery of fashioning, of all that jumble, a perfect printed page.

Perhaps Fourth and Warren is often a quiet corner. But it's the quiet of deep water, in which lurk so many fantastic marine inhabitants we'd be delighted to know. Brick walls are unassuming. But look again, look sharply, and the figures, moving in a century and a half of breathless wonders, look back at you.

## XIV

### I CAN (NOT) TELL A LIE

**O**NE last arrival gallops to the Tavern door. Sliding from the saddle, he tethers his blowing beast to the post there, and stamps earnestly up the steps. Five quick raps at the door panel gain him admittance. And inside he encounters a remarkable sight. The room is thick-crowded with men, and the reluctant dark, checked only by the mild reproof of flickering tapers, darts out from the corners at every chance. Only faces nearest the candles are clear, even they in an unearthly hue. And voices, loud and angry voices, jumble together in such conglomeration that Babel seems once again to have visited the race with a confusion of tongues. Strong men

mutter black curses into their mugs. And above the tumult, sometimes rage finds escape in a full-blown roar: "I say that red-coats are devil's coats." That fat swine George III!" "———yes, and drown every last British b——— in his own blood!" In such a terrific hubbub none but the guard sees our horseman enter. He searches quickly among the dark and agitated figures, quite in vain, till a friendly candle chanced to sputter a special light for his aid. Then, in a jiffy, he slides onto the bench beside Asa, and the melee closes around him like a sea.

Suddenly the clear voice of Daniel Buck demands: "Order;" and the special meeting of the men of King's District, Albany County, is in session. Just a brief space they spend on perfunctory

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“business.” Then at last comes the critical resolution which their hearts have hoped for, yet hoped with an early-morning tingle because of the stark crisis it forebodes. “Resolved,” comes the deep boom, “that King’s District chooses to have the American colonies **independent of Great Britain.**” And they ring out their assent as in a dream. Feet stamp, and excited fists rise as if to drive the very thought of George III from the air they breathe. And a secretary records: “Voted unanimously in the affirmative.”

Thus, the tenth day before the Declaration of Independence, on June 24, 1776, bold men from a District entirely included in the present boundaries of Columbia County, gave England the chal-

*I CAN (NOT) TELL A LIE*

lenge to battle. It was the time for courage, the moment to strike. And in an age that dared, no supporters of the glorious cause were bolder than our own.

At Canaan Center there remains still the foundation of Warner's Tavern in which they met. Its cellar walls are clearly marked. And in its stones there is a small compartment where flagons of old wine might have lain, or a hunted enemy of the King. How still the place is now! On one side is a church. And empty fields on two others assure silence for most of the week, since the dusty road to the front carries but a little traffic to annoy the quiet. Yet the message: That our ancient sires earned their full share in America's heritage (and our share as well) is clear to the

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merest observer. And at the same time, one can't help but admire how the earth of our old county has preserved in these stones all that it could of that historic moment, like a proud old father who cherishes everything which was companion to his sons' nobility.

But, of course, King's District hummed some political notes less true than this magnificent essay for civil liberty. When discontent was so rife, when every difficulty had a panacea to match, they floundered off, sometimes, in a maze few of their countrymen were able to avoid. Money was literally scarce, surely an aggravating situation. But soap-box statesmen were wont to declaim that paper money, in any needed amount, was the key to prosperity. Print it in whatever quantity you need? Whee!



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What a dandy arrangement!! And loyal patriots were led to a device of "legal counterfeiting," believing it a national blessing. In 1784 King's District spoke up. And at a special meeting its men voted for "A Bank of paper currency to be put on an equal footing with silver and gold." Of course the panacea failed, ruining men by the score, and proving a curse to business. Yet how soothing it is to recall that all patriots of '76 were not saints and geniuses! They not only made a mistake or two; but sometimes, I have reason to believe, they even told a fib.

Yet they loved the State, these King's District men; and however rude its methods, they cherished its justice. A public notice of the year 1786 carries a firm text of their civil philosophy, and

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it commanded complete obeisance to the law of the land. "To any Constable:" the document opens, "James Cole has been convicted of Pettelarsenea, and stands condemned to be whipped on the naked back fifteen stripes; in the name of the people, we command you forth to put the judgment of this court in execution." And it was signed by the trial justices. One wonders how James came to be abroad unpunished? Did he escape, or did they arrive at their verdict in his absence? And alas, the bitter fact! A constable named Gridley was paid six shillings for the service of lashing.

Once again **mirabile dictu!** In 1792 their indignation swept them anew into fiery meeting, this time because a board of canvassers had abused their powers

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over the voting privilege—in short they'd "fixed" an election. Alack, our ancestry! The town rose up, as its record reads, "to oppose any attempt to defeat, or impair, or destroy the free exercise or enjoyment of the inestimable right of suffrage." And since no further complaints are noted, elections must ever since have been stainless as little Eva.

Oh, the good old days! Perhaps "the evil men do lives after them," but not long enough sometimes for their own good, if the truth were known. When men of Kings, by their declaration of independence and their conduct in the Revolution, won themselves the tribute of their sons and successors, they remained as vigorous as they were valiant. Without a doubt, most of them chewed tobacco and spat. And that they did,

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that they stumbled politically sometimes, I'm glad to know, and own a healthier admiration for it. They might so easily have failed, those patriots, in such a grueling crisis. That they did not, doesn't make them godly, but manly.

## XV

### FAST HORSES

“**W**E had 'em, lots of 'em! But people don't seem to care so much any more. Why, when I was a boy there were three running tracks in Copake alone; and then Barrington, Hudson, Chatham and Rhinebeck, all right nearby, kept tracks too. Why, I remember ———” And he was off on the proverbial racetrack yarn. If you can picture him, so much the better, eighty-seven, small, bent, and a touch unsteady in the hands. His eyes a trifle bleary. But attend his own declaration: “I read without glasses, have full health, and am glad to have people stop by to find out things.” Old Milt is a character. And he truly loves the days when his town had three trotting tracks; when there was,

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too, a crowd of fast horses there, whose eager devotees kept their dancing eyes on the graceful rhythm of quick-stamping hooves.

“One time, they staged a queer race,” the old gentleman continued. “There were two horses from Sheffield, fine ones, boy, rangy and stout, both coal black. Just a picture to see ’em swing along! Wal, the owners didn’t know half as much as those great animals, no sir, not half. ’Cos they bargained to run ’em on the old Halstead track, in a thirty-mile go, for no reason! Just a bet. And neither of ’em had the sense to call the fool business off. So away the two jet fellas went, a trottin’ like the thoroughbreds they were, as fine a brace of beasts as I ever did see! And they ran for most three hours. Mighty game, yes



### *FAST HORSES*

sir, game! Now you ask me who won. I dunno but what they both lost; 'cos, for a horse, even a great horse, that's a gruelling pull. Guess though," and he twinkled, "it must have been the black."

Horse-racing, "the sport of Kings!" And so often rich blood present is quite confined to the fleet royalty of the track. Splendid animals! Lithe, nervous, courageous beasts! They make a kingly sight, and often in the measure of their performance, forge a kingly record. Where else is there a like utter expenditure of strength? Where the gallant finish? And, as long as bidden, as often as bidden, their proud sides all a-heave, nostrils wide and manes flying, they charge brilliantly for the wire, with every fibre shouting: "I'll finish first or die."

Naturally enough there's a full lore

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of the track here in Columbia. I say naturally, for our treasure-box is too full to be readily duplicated. Old Milt spoke truly of three tracks in Copake, one a full mile, and two of half that distance. What's more at the Stone Mills in Claverack, just a brace of miles out of Bell's Pond, was the first track in the county. And there John Spillane, who lived to drive a sulky as one of the world's greatest, sat first behind a hard-running trotter. Not a trace of any of these to-day! Gone, just as the track in Hudson has disappeared, except in the memories of our sires, who recollect it with a sigh. But on every one of them, famous challengers and champions were groomed for fame. It was a victory some of them won, and all deserved.

An old timer will smile knowingly at

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the name, Billy Andrews. Remarkable horse! And his career was extraordinary from the day of his first fated race. He was bred, you see, at Copake on the Empire Stock Farm; and perhaps some god of coincidence marked him apart. Training done, he became the Empire entry for the first race run on the new Empire track in Yonkers. Wing-footed fellow, he won. But imagine the gasp of amazement which greeted his record time, 2:06 $\frac{1}{2}$ ! which in that year was simply astounding.

From the same farm forth to campaign came trotters like Theodore Shelton and Bush. The latter gallant was a record horse, who lived, it may be, a little out of time. For his was the thrilling duel, a losing duel, with H. J. Rockwell. Why, Chatham grand stands rock-

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ed with startled glee, to see the champion humbled. Fortune and misfortune! It's the ancient, bitter balance which makes living the race of the strong. These staunch horses **lived** every day of their thrilling, fighting, racing existence. Bismark, Lizzie O'Brien, Goldsmith Maid, St. Julian, one could count off numbers more. Such ranking horses were only a few in our long line, which to latter-day eyes seem a grand tradition.

But racing has another aspect, something different. It's not very nice. But to neglect it would be historically inexcusable; and besides it's half the fun. What would be the delight of owning horses if you couldn't "trade 'em." I refer to the old definition of trade, in which you told the truth about a horse in order to convey the opposite. Once in

### *FAST HORSES*

Hudson a trade carried this dialogue: "Can that horse run?" "Can he run! Why, his runnin' is the most surprisin' and delightful thing I ever did see." In fact, if the horse ran it was not only surprising but miraculous. And it was the rarity which made it so delightful. And on the track, equally, a real spice is added by the shrewd fool, which sometimes "sneaks one across." Perhaps it's the weakness of the race.

Oddly, the best illustration came to life under most inoffensive auspices. A godly minister, off in a Bible-belt of Pennsylvania, owned a horse which he claimed was fifty-four years old. "Huh," came the cry, "it must be part elephant!" And the search of the cynics began; bound, they were, to prove the claim a folly. But essence of chagrin



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and day of miracles! The beast was actually four years over the half-century mark. What's peculiarly intriguing, his history was traced back to Columbia County, where part of his youth was spent, and many of his races won. He, none other than the notorious Rover!

You're of course familiar with "My Double and How He Undid Me." This is a similar tale, with the added advantage of verity. You see, Jonas———\* owned the old trotter Rover. And by chance he discovered Rover's exact double, a horse called Brightwood. To see them together they were identical. Though only to see. For Rover was a winner; and Brightwood hardly too fast for an ice-wagon. But for Jonas' scheme the resemblance was enough. He intend-

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\*Surname withheld for reasons apparent.



### FAST HORSES

ed to run Rover as a beginner under the name of Brightwood; while the real Brightwood stayed in pasture. Doubles were again undoing, this time the racing world.

Posing as his own son, the practiced old trotter set out to sweep the two-year-old tracks. What a find! Race after race lined old Jonas' pocket with more than velvet. But alas! Gullible men refused to bite, after a bit; and up strode the sheriff. His star of authority marked the *de-ouement*. For the racer called "Brightwood," when scrutinized, was older than Jonas' subtle arithmetic allowed for; and into court they swept him, heavy charged with fraud. But there was still more. Down from Columbia County farms came his furious friends. Honest farmers, still deluded by the most

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exact likeness in horses these parts have ever seen, swore that the "find" was Brightwood, a two-year-old, just as Jonas claimed. They'd seen him bred, they declared, and spoke "straight goods." But it only proved that Jonas was even smarter than these friends had figured—for Rover and Brightwood were two horses, but only one racer. After this sinful period in his youth, Rover must have reformed. He lived quietly thereafter to the ripe old age of four and fifty. Yes, and lived at last in the company of a good clergyman, with whom he is said to have been very intimate.

All kinds! To lose one of them would leave us the poorer. Lizzie O'Brien and a fantastic Rover were worlds apart, but each had a part in our story! And down to triumphant creatures of a later

### FAST HORSES

day the gallant sport has pealed a hearty note, a splendid note, through its years of life. On our Chatham track two present world's champions won their first laurels; so the day of the sulky is still bright here. Perhaps Old Milt, despite his wisdom, was wrong to suggest its passing. And may an enthusiast be forgiven a mild "I hope so!"



Royalty



Three Roberts

## XVI

### FOUR WALLS

**W**ITHIN them lies the legend of a family. Seldom are forefathers this lucky—to be so dearly cherished, each in his turn for nine successive generations, by very blood-children. Small wonder that they peer down so proudly! They who filled great roles in American history have found fortune beyond the pale of the living. Theirs was the blessing of fine sons. And here in this Cheviot reception room, the close bond of a common heritage finds them, old Livingstons and new, one in spirit.

There are no vestiges left of the first Manor Houses. But of all the later mansions built under the name Livingston, and with all the special claims



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each has to admiration, one doesn't forget Northwood. When Robert E. Livingston chose this ground for his manse-to-be, aimless wild things trotted over the rustling paths among the oak and linden trees of the wood. Before him rolled the Hudson; and the majestic sweep of the Catskills lay just across a great, green monument to Divinity; and as he looked he must have felt his fortune. There he built Northwood, which today is the home of an eighth, a ninth and a tenth generation of American Livingstons, the oldest family of great stature in America.

In that house is one of the most intriguing rooms. Enter it through the double door from the hall-way, its colorings are quite richly dark, and quiet.



#### FOUR WALLS

There, full ahead, as if in reception, await the imposing figures of three Robert Livingstons. To the left of the fireplace hangs the likeness of the premier Robert, first Lord of the Manor, whose fame goes back to dawn in America. For a study what quite equals the face? And the features of this first Livingston offer endless material for research. Keen, gray eyes look down unflinching. His strong chin juts out, something pointed, in ready sign that the fiery mind back of those searching eyes had the supporting power of courage. The high forehead is crowned by a magnificent golden wig in the fashion of his age. And his expression, not smiling but sure, is remarkable in dignity. This is the man whose motto was: "I hope for the best."

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And perhaps in the full poise of his mien it seems clear that the best of hopes were achieved. To him, of course, is the first presentation. And one feels it quite splendid, and it may be, a little unreal, to be thus cordially met by the sire of them all. A touch wistfully one turns away, still quite lost in a courtly aura, to view the successor Livingstons.

The great *primus* is attended about the same fire-place by two other Roberts, as mentioned. They, you see, are more modern sons, whose place it is to "carry on." Strong men and quiet! But while they maintain a graceful dignity in our meeting, their friendly tweeds are a more familiar touch, after the imposing wig and robe of an ancient Lord.

#### FOUR WALLS

Well into the room, now, first bows are quite performed. Look, then, toward the river wall of the room. High upon it, over the great windows, is a set of armor. And near the corner of the wall, where the three Roberts are, is a second set. Visored helmets, a brace of murderous-looking pikes and breast plates! They're memories of a distant, bitter day even before the "first Robert," whom we met, came to be. It's Old Scotland. It's there, when the clan Livingston of Callendar, like all of that fervid country, was embroiled in the Crown and religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. A breath of those kilted fighters touches the room. Just a bit of armor. And one knows that proud Scotland, the Scotland bleeding sometimes in unhappiness, has a sway not ending at her shores.

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Turn right again now, to face the north wall, through whose door we entered the room. And from it looks down at you the magnificent portrait of Edward Livingston, whose career was as starkly dramatic as a novel. He met with savage abuse and political failure so flagrant that any restoration seemed impossible. A trusted agent had absconded with the funds of New York City. And Mayor Livingston was made responsible. His resignation was turned in, and he liquidated a fortune to meet this obligation to the government. Thus in abject defeat, quite poor, he left New York for New Orleans. But there came success, just as bright as the fortunate years before the bitter New York episode. He rebuilt his private fortune; he had a brilliant record as a lawyer; and

#### FOUR WALLS

by compiling the Louisiana Code, became world famous as a scholar of jurisprudence. And there was more. With General Jackson at the battle of New Orleans, Livingston performed a brilliant war service. And in a full political career he became a Congressman for several terms, a United States Senator, Secretary of State under President Jackson, and finally Minister to France. Such a brilliant looks quietly down from his rest on the wall. His fine head is proudly poised; and clear eyes indicate that there must be truth in the words of Justice Kent about his New York misfortune: "You received an atrocious injustice."

Quite different are the flanking prints; they make one pause and reflect. On one side is the Rev. John Living-



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ston, on the other, his wife Janet Fleming. This pair makes such an unlovely foil for all their sons' dignity. They



Rev. John

are, plainly and unaffectedly, queer. Huddled in their Scottish Kirk dress, they seem hunched, old-world, and severe, a simple couple indeed for a man and woman of aristocratic position, and founders of such an illustrious line, quite apart from the rank of gentry tailor-made.



#### FOUR WALLS

But lower to the right (and all about them, indeed,) is their *apologia*, if such they need. There, signed by the hand



Wife of Rev. John

of George Washington is a certificate: That Robert R. Livingston, the Chancellor, in recognition of his signal services, was admitted to honorary membership in the Revolutionary War legion of honor, the Order of Cincinnati. One hundred and fifty years ago the great character was so deservedly honored. And now,

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in this house of his sons, we move a few steps more, and meet face to face the handsome, the benign statesman and eminent jurist, Chancellor Livingston himself.

No need even to mention his achievement. But the splendid man, with his high, fair forehead, his full chin, yes, through all his fine person, is every inch the aristocrat, and every fiber the patriot and statesman.

The last formal presentation, to the great portrait-occupants of the East Wall, is Judge Robert Livingston, and his gracious, accomplished wife. Again is melded a patriot and a gentleman. Perhaps less handsome than his son, Chancellor Livingston, no face is more open and good-humored than his. And with this great figure so choicely dressed, his

#### FOUR WALLS

white wig a crown above a strong, and a fine face, no man was more noble in bearing than this one of the many Robert Livingstons.

Great and gracious figures, every one! Theirs is the power to reach out to us through the years, because with gentility they mixed a splendid achievement. Until the complete round was done one couldn't break away. Not even for time enough to notice that almost every piece of furniture is a tie to the years back of us. Even the baby chair 'neath Judge Livingston's lady's portrait, seems to say that: "Little people, but little people who became great have been my company." Perhaps a Secretary of State! And smaller things like etchings, gim-cracks, tin-types, or more recent snapshots, and all such give an

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intermediate record of family activity which so warms the more formal claims of famous portraiture. It's a family room, a family of Columbia,—another of the things interesting for what they are and more so for what they make you remember.

Walk then to the veranda and look out at delightful landscape. There, across the yard, it seems, lie the magnificent Catskills. And watch the lovely Hudson roll; splendid river which a Livingston of old captured here for his lake. And the river curves so that blue appears through the trees on either hand, as it stretches off to Albany and New York, where ancient greats mounted the rostra, to honor their nation and their name.

Listen a bit! Inside, the aged grand-

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father clock, all the distance from Holland, ticks monotonously on. In the green lawns grass-hoppers sing away. A light breeze stirs up a ripple on the water, and a rustle in the two-century oaks in the yard. All's well in Livingston land. Nothing seems to change.



## XVII

### MERINO

**T**HERE'S a winding forest road. Heels or hooves crunch on it because the gravel is kept crisp by the near, cool trees. On either side spread green boughs, with just the smallest forest clutterings over the ground. It makes a quiet wood, yet expectant. How easy to imagine it the home of a rollicking elvin clan; as if a quick ear would surely detect the click of their tenpins from a neighboring glade! Little whiskered fellows in their green suits and hats! They frolic quite naturally in just such a setting, their companionable keg of joviality never too distant. It's cool here, but summery. And as an abode or spur for rumination, try to fetch its like.



### MERINO

At the head of this twisty sylvan way is a castle. Like a page out of Ivanhoe, it marks the summit of our climb, far out of touch with the world because of the rustic beauties, and mountain fastness, and the veil of pageantry between. It seems as if there might be a moat and drawbridge. Perhaps over it a troupe of Arthurian Knights in mail would clatter, off to fulfill a quest. But a second look says no. For the lines are not Gothic, but Persian. And then, against the high walls, to storm the corner towers one visions the charge of a Saracen horde. The thunder of their furious battle would ring through all this glade—but not beyond, because of the protecting forest wall. That leafy gird sets this reddish castle quite apart; and more, makes it so easy to see another world gathered here.

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But across the grounds and beyond the castle lies a climax. It's a joy to roam fresh, quiet wild woods. And to view a magnificent castle home, holding the key to a world of its own, lends real pleasure, a work of art, because a man has achieved beauty. But beyond the castle lay more. A first view of it often proves breathtaking, perhaps because its perfection of expanse is such a contrast to the close views among the



**Catskills Over the Hudson**

### MERINO

trees. Through a royal blue sky fluffy clouds float along, in entrancing figures fickle as fashion. They simply crown the far-stretching Catskills across the River from us, whose miles of wooded mountain, in this summer sun, vary from deep indigo to a dancing green.

Nearer here the hills dip to meet orchard-covered and tilled expanses in the valley, they likewise decked in choicest summer hues. And the basking blue Hudson, open-faced in the sun! It twists some to lend ruffles to its own soft banks. And finally, to our right it passes, blue as ever, under the Rip Van Winkle bridge which seems livid, so bright is its reflected silver fire. Perfect! All of it! But then, maybe it had to be. Otherwise, a landscape genius of the canvas would have gone on and on, still search-

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ing for his scene; but here lay this choicest expanse, which must indeed have fallen from the sky. He built his castle. And cradled in the beauties of his woodlands, of his courtly halls, of his everchanging and ever gorgeous landscape, dwelt Frederick E. Church, a world-renowned artist who believed his view in Columbia County was the second finest in all the world.

Opera stars must be Foreign they tell me. And I suppose, too, that artists are popularly linked to Rome or Paris. But Frederick Edwin Church, "who did for American painting what Irving did for literature," as Charles Dudley Warner puts it, was born in Hartford, Connecticut. And too, in the 19th Century he was a genius of his world.

### MERINO

One author writes of him: "His genius developed among the wild ridges and stony reveries of the Catskills." And that explains, perhaps, his love of our countryside, and the subsequent discovery of his vantage point on Mount Merino. He learned to lose himself in wild things. And from ingenious masters he came by the power to set down immortally the gorgeous natural scenes he found. To search them out he moved all over the world, and his subjects came from every clime. Nothing was too splendid for him to essay; and no country could be too far for him to reach, seeking more of the beauties he so loved to record.

In South America, he traveled for months through utter wilderness, the first of his race to see many a hidden, howl-



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ing wild. Out of Mexico he gathered a remarkable collection of Aztec handicraft. And in Laborador, the Andes, Old World or wherever, so truly did his landscapes "hold the mirror up to nature" that a knowing traveler could place each scene from its botany, or the wild life therein. About his strict accuracy Warren wrote: "For all his photographic style he was never lost in detail, simply amazingly able to see and to record it." You see, he'd known and loved this beauty from his boyhood. One work is "Niagara." And the very name tells how extraordinary was his art, that m a g i c, thundering, beautiful torrent. Other painters had seemed foolish in their vain attempts to capture its splendor; Church astonished his age by the living perfection he set on canvas. Wat-



### MERINO

er, stone, and sky are in delicate tune. The Falls seem almost real enough to hear their roar, as they tumble into the gorge. And in matching this matchless art he painted themes from everywhere, New World and Old.

Add one fact. At the ripest time in his career his magic right hand grew lame. Never again could it trace nature as if he'd fashioned it first himself. But indomitable man! He, well passed middle age, forced his left hand to take on the cunning of the other; and soon he painted with that left the hills and water and trees so dear to him.

Such a man it was who said that his view in our county was second only to one, and that in an Andes' wilderness. Who would venture to object? He built

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the castle. He preserved the forest groves and its winding road. He cherished the glorious expanse up the Hudson, and of the Catskills beyond. Before, we spoke of Saracens. Better, now, to speak of Church.

## XVIII

### AND SAILED THE SEAS

**M**YSTERY and power! Romance and majesty! They are captive in a word that always has and doubtless ever will thrill the souls of men, the Sea. "The wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking!" Picture prows scudding through creamy crests! And the towering mast! It carries forward a great ship by capturing all the wind this side of the clouds. Seeing that one can be far less than a poet and still share in the glorious revel of the ocean. Ships float to the end of the earth in dignity, gathering from every clime and each variety of storm or calm, a wealth of lore mere land-fellows can only approximate. They don't talk much either.

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But hawsered to the dock they tug anxiously at creaking, reproachful ropes, as if bored by inactivity. You see, ships hug, through all their barnacled bosoms, the grim joy in braving whatever's abroad; and 'till the last fleet voyage, whatever the wild buffeting of storms, they stay true. Not for one, but for fifty glorious years, Hudson docks teemed with the activity of ships and shipping. Swash-buckling sailors strode their brusque way in our streets. They were men of the sea, kerchiefed and tawny, who had felt the murderous cut of a whistling wind while perched in the swinging rigging. With all they'd seen and done, their very presence was a yarn. And the boats crowding the wharves made our river-front throb with activity. It was a century ago, and more.

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But the story of it hasn't died; and being so charged with the full fire of "Sea-Fever," it won't.

The "Proprietors" brought with them from New England more than a score of vessels. But almost at once thriving trade demanded more and more carrying crafts, geared for heavy seas. It was Titus who built the first. Not an Emperor, of course, he was a shipbuilder, Titus Morgan, Esq., whose yard soon brought to his city "a reputation for substantial vessels." The construction of boats became itself a thriving industry. There was a day, when five ships on the stocks, part-way completed, made no rare sight. And launching days were as frequent as they were hilarious. Outside the shipyards, booths would spring up to dispense refreshments with a generous



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hand. There could be no school that day. Even staid business closed shop, for prospective buyers were far too busy launching to make mere shopping of account. To help swell the throng, the whole country-side in holiday mood was apt to join the fun. And finally, when the vessel slid into the water, a full roar fairly thundered skyward. There were guns, too, nondescript mementos of the Revolution. But fire away they did; and so, to heighten its cheers, the throng enjoyed some ear-splitting cannonading. It was all a noisy, happy melee. And in that confusion surely one shuffle-gaited imp would stumble into a private launching. Came the helpless splash! And a second round of applause streaked with laughter, greeted his sputtering, bewildered emergence.



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His act is always priceless. And t'would be disconcerting indeed to hear that our shrewd antecedents wasted more beverage than they could afford on so unparched a subject as a fresh prow. Never they, I'm sure. Everything done, it made for fun and fury. But Hudson hearts were justly light on such a day. For new ships augured another prosperous page in the early happy history of our county-seat.

Shipping from Hudson, in its heyday, measured an almost unbelievable value. Back in the days when residents frequently spoke better Dutch than English, as many as fifteen laden vessels spread their sails at one time. In the year 1786 Hudson boasted more ships than were then owned in the City of New York. And not only the whole county,

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but an area well east into Massachusetts, used Hudson for its shipping center. There's many a Stockbridge diary to tell how merchants shipped by wagon to Hudson, and thence to the Indies or Europe. So valuable was this source of trade that later the Hudson and Berkshire Railroad was built to carry it. Further, one report states that on March 1, 1802, twenty-eight hundred sleighs pulled into Hudson; and that the champing lines of them waiting to unload for shipment jammed the city streets.

Home-coming loads, of course, were equally great but somehow more intriguing. I can't believe, though, that all the spice aboard was cargo. Old accounts, for example, dwell with special emphasis on that finest Jamaica export, Rum. And it's an easy and perhaps not

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an unjust speculation that ships could be as soundly and happily welcomed as launched. Perhaps Hudson of old was father to the famous watchword: "The fleet's in." She certainly smiled in that spirit.

But now to the grand venture of them all. For daring it defies the world. It's an adventure, wild and distant, demanding such high courage and grim stamina as are seldom found. Whaling! That's the word, and that enterprise throbbed with every fervid risk imaginable. Off a whaler moved, waved dearly away by two hundred hands; on its journey to the dark waters where whale abounded, with no respite short of two years. Often it's asked how Hudson, 115 miles from the ocean, could be a whaling center. And that protracted sail of

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thousands of miles is the complete answer. For against two unending years what possible difference could the two days' trip to New York make? These grim fellows might well have retorted: "That's only a decent swim."

And stand in a small boat with some of those valiants. When a man has only inches between him and the sea, has only oars and a puny harpoon for defense, when thus critically unsupported he attacks the greatest beast in the ocean, he's close to the brink. Then a whaling ship which we might deem tiny would loom secure as a continent. And when the harpoon struck, off they were tugged by the wounded Titan, frantic now in his mad surge to run free. The rope attached would slide out, and perhaps be quite used up by the racing monster.

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Then, hatchet in hand, one taut sailor was guarding their lives. His was the job to chop them loose of the harpooned sea-beast, if his plunges threatened to sink their skiff and them. God, the fury of it! When they won it was glorious. But sometimes—they didn't.

Hudson was in the very thick of it. Our own whalers visited all the haunts of the sperm whale there were; and local oil industries, and candle-making thrived as never since. A little before 1800 on the ship "American Hero," Captain Solomon Bunker, brought here from the Pacific Ocean a cargo of sperm oil that was then the largest ever carried to the United States. That was a challenging feat. And the shore industries adjunct to whaling kept pace. When the French Minister, Prince Tallyrand, visited the



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United States, he came to Hudson to see the oil works of Thomas Jenkins, then as extensive as any existing. Is it any wonder that Hudson of those years moved so swiftly into prominence? And equally, that it encountered a dull period when the War of 1812 put its sharp check on shipping of all kinds.

In 1829 the city sought to revive its whaling. A fleet of fourteen vessels again swept out to sea in the hunt for whale; and they met success. One vessel brought in an eighty thousand dollar cargo, while their combined yield reached eight thousand barrels a year. No telling how long the brave business might have lasted! But new discoveries put sperm oil at a disadvantage; and whaling again fell into decline here, this time to vanish. When the railroads

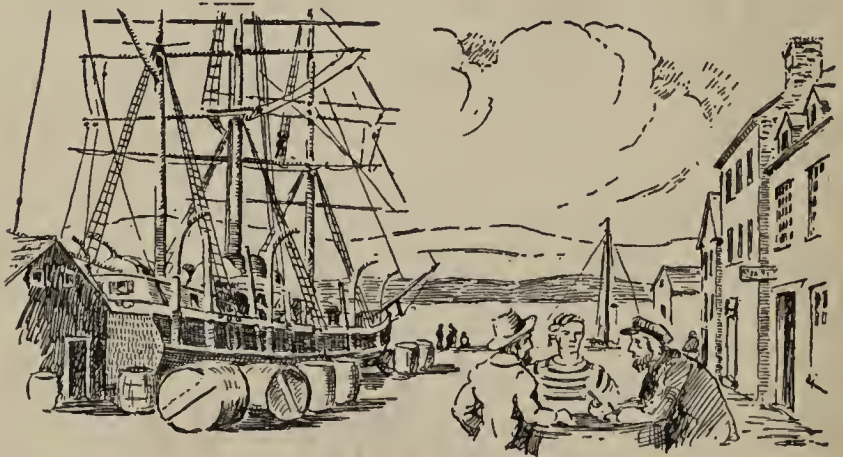
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spread their service Hudson's shipping interest was largely dissipated. As a port, the city came to be only the docking place for steamboats en route to Albany or New York, and for river barges carrying local freight and merchandise for transshipment to the east. The day of the locally-owned schooner, the sight of full sail shaking in the wind, of Hudson voyagers setting forth to all the world, was gone forever.

Looking back on such vital living, on such color and gripping adventure, makes one feel a little lost in pronouncing the word, "Gone." Perhaps the life of the sea was bitter. It may be that men were hurt, and groaned. But it was fine, too; and seamen with years of that very experience looked back over it, remem-

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bered its every phase, and winked their piercing eyes to keep them dry. Perhaps its our fortune that the memory of ships here recalls no stench of machines, or black smoke blowing. It was the "wind's song," then. And we hear it uninterrupted.



*Home Again*

## A F T E R W O R D

*Even viewed from an older land, "Old Columbia" seems a full theme; for it represents a whole gamut of civilization; and it is vastly more exciting for having grown up so fast.*

*Now, a little book requires a brief epilogue. So, in a breath, let me say this: Mine, perhaps, is an oft-told tale. But it's one that whatever the telling has friends. It's to its friends that the book has been offered.*

*D. V. M. Jr.*

*Balliol College*

*Oxford*

*November 30, 1936.*

